

Kindergarten Readiness

What is kindergarten readiness? Many parents are confused by what determines readiness for their child to start school. Just because your child has reached the age of five by the middle of August, it does not mean that he or she is ready to spend all day in an academic environment. It is for this reason that *Saint Brendan School* faculty will assess your child before accepting him or her for kindergarten.

How can I tell if my child is ready? If she is in preschool, talk to her teacher. She probably has a good sense of her development and how she compares with other children who would be at her grade level. If your child is not in preschool or you just want another opinion, check with your pediatrician. She will know about your child's physical development and can offer helpful feedback as to whether your child is ready.

What types of skills indicate that my child is ready? The following are some of the signs that your child is ready for the kindergarten program offered at *Saint Brendan School*:

1. Is he English proficient and can he communicate in complete sentences? It is important that children at this level be able to communicate their needs and wishes clearly and be able to answer simple questions.
2. Can she sit still for at least 10 minutes at a time and listen to a story? Can she then answer simple questions about what she just saw or heard? Kindergarten students need to be able to focus their attention and retain information that is presented by the teacher.
3. Can he listen to instructions and then follow them? Children need these skills to function in class, to keep up with the teacher and with their peers.
4. Is he able to put on his coat and use the restroom by himself?
5. Can she recite and recognize the alphabet? Can she count and recognize numbers? Children need to have at least a rudimentary

familiarity with the ABCs and numbers even though these subjects will be covered as part of the kindergarten curriculum.

6. Can he hold a pencil? Cut with scissors? He will need these fine motor skills to begin working on writing the alphabet and to keep up with classroom projects.
7. Does she show an interest in books? Does she try to “read” a book by telling a story based on the pictures? This is a sign that her language development is on par with other kindergarteners and that she is ready to start learning to read.
8. Is he curious and receptive to learning new things? If a child’s curiosity is stronger than his fear of the unfamiliar, he will do well in school.
9. Does he get along well with other children? Does he share and know how to take turns? He will be interacting with other children every day, so a child’s social skills are particularly important for success in school.
10. Can she work together with others as part of a group? The ability to put her needs second, to compromise and join in a consensus with other children, is also part of emotional competence.

What should I do if my child is not judged to be ready at this time?

If your child is assessed as not yet ready for an academic kindergarten program, there is no need to panic. Research has shown that there is nothing lost by simply waiting another year. We all want school to be a positive experience for your child and it is far better for them to spend an additional year in preschool or a pre-K program than to be put in a situation that would prove to be stressful and unproductive.